

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

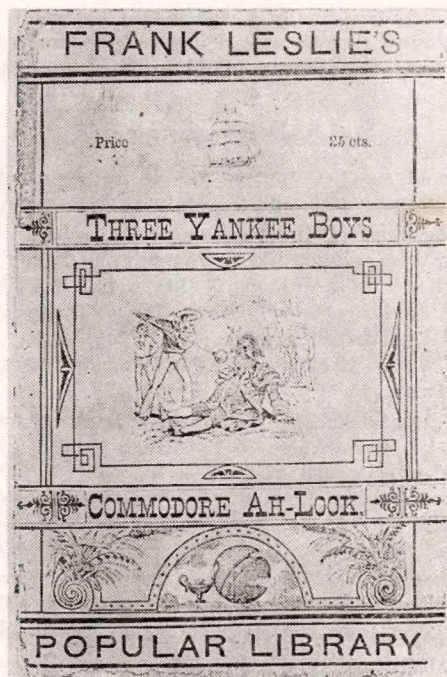
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Whole No. 523

Diamond Dick

By J. Randolph Cox



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 195

FRANK LESLIE'S POPULAR LIBRARY

Publisher: Frank Leslie Publishing House, 537 Pearl St., New York, N. Y.
Issues: Not known. Dates: 1877. Schedule of Issue: Unknown. Size: 9½x6¼".
Pages: The one issue examined had 104 pages. Price: 25c. Illustration: small line drawing on cover, numerous inside black and white line drawings evidently taken from Frank Leslie's Boys and Girls Weekly. Contents: The one issue seen is titled Three Yankee Boys by Commodore Ah-Look.

Dime Novel Reviews

(Being a Series of Retrospective Glances at Some Significant Items of
Newsstand Literature of Yesterday)

By J. Randolph Cox

No. 2. Dashing Diamond Dick; or, The Tigers of Tombstone, by W. B. Lawson

Chapter I: "The Leap of the Tigers"

The rise of Tombstone, Arizona—the city described—its nightlife explained. The time is Summer. On the main street between the Wells Fargo office on one side of the thoroughfare and the Here-it-Is Hotel and Restaurant on the other, there is a little drama being enacted.

Thomas Hart, alias Tornado Tom, wealthy gambler and mine owner, had been drinking. As a result, he was using gun and whip to make poor Heinrich Scwauenflegle, proprietor of the hotel, "dance" in the lobby. The fun was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of the stage coach. The usual driver, Sandy Rocks ("Rockinghorse Sandy") was not at the reins. In his place was Walter James, the young express guard, his head bound with a blood-stained rag. He explained that Sandy was killed by road agents and that he was wounded by them.

Chapter 2: "A Beautiful Vision"

Everyone mourned Sandy. Walter James described the road agents as dressed in yellow clothes with black splotches. Their faces were masked with cat masks. The chief of the road agents was "a little, slim-built cuss, with a soft, soothing voice, almost like a woman's; said they were the Tigers of Tombstone, and' durn me for a dummy, if they didn't look it, too, every time."

It was as if the road agents were expecting to find someone in particular on the stage and had been disappointed.

Then, from the stage coach there stepped a woman, unaccountably overlooked until that moment.

"... a sudden, breathless hush fell upon that throng of rough humanity, for out from the semi-darkness in the coach came the bonniest face that mortal eyes had ever gazed upon.

"It was like a vision, framed as it was by the door of the coach—a thing of unearthly beauty—such a face as some of the old masters saw in their dreams, and dimly pictured in their waking moments.

"Purity sat enthroned on that low, polished brow, where the hair clustered and coiled back and fell in a cascade of reddish gold; and truth looked fearlessly out from the clear depths of the hazel eyes."

There was a rush to guide the newcomer to proper quarters after her long

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journal. Walt (wounded though he was) suggested the Here-it-is Hotel, but Tornado Tom offered to take the lady under his own not too respectable wing. The objections of the crowd were silenced by Tom. And then, "like a thunderbolt from a clear sky came an unexpected diversion."

Chapter 3: "A Duel by Moonlight"

Unseen by the crowd, a man wearing a serape and slouch hat had ridden into town. He was accompanied by a boy with long, yellow hair. The man dismounted and they both watched the little drama. As Tornado Tom reached for the girl a second time, he felt a hand grip his wrist.

"Hands off, you hound!" said the man in the serape. He followed that command with a few well-chosen words expressive of his opinion of Tornado Tom's attitude toward women. Their discussion resulted in an exchange of blows and in the gambler drawing his gun. The boy rode between at that point and drew his own gun. At that, Tornado Tom holstered his gun, while the stranger told his boy companion he could fight his own battles. Tom and the stranger agreed to a duel to settle their differences ("Fifteen paces with pistols") and Tom asked the stranger's name.

The stranger's name was Diamond Dick!

"He was tall of form and straight as a lance, his every motion being distinguished by a lithe, panther-like grace. His face was very handsome, a strange, white pallor contrasting curiously with the dark, brilliant eyes and hair, and mustache of raven hue.

"He was dressed like a Spanish hidalgo, but the fanciful costume was adorned in a manner such as never before was seen.

"All about his person a myriad of diamonds flashed and burned, and sparkled, and shot out star-like rays of mystic light. In the snowy frills of the shirt, three stones gleamed like smoldering fire; the short jacket, terminating at the waist, had set in lieu of numerous buttons, on either side of the open front, a mass of sparkling brilliants, the nether garment, slashed open at the side, almost to the hips, was ornamented by a double row of flashing gems, and the soft felt hat upon his head was looped up at the side by a diamond star.

"In the silken scarf wound time and again about his waist, the ends trailing gracefully down at the side, were thrust two revolvers with diamond sights."

The two foes took their places with the boy, Bertie, Diamond Dick's son, prepared to give the signal. They drew. Two shots were heard, but not from their guns! Someone else had shot first and had shot away the hammers from both their guns! At the head of the plaza was a rider with a smoking revolver, a rider dressed like a tiger!

Walt James sprang forward: "That's the Thomas K. Cat who bosses the Tigers of Tombstone."

Chapter 4: "Diamond Dick Receives a Letter"

Before the quickly drawn guns of the miners could be fired, the apparition rode off. The duel had to be postponed since the Tiger's bullet had shot away the upper joint of Tornado Tom's right thumb. Diamond Dick assured the gambler he could wait, but he failed to hear the muttered curses and promises of vengeance that came from Tornado Tom.

Diamond Dick's reputation was known to few in Tombstone, but he was welcomed with open arms by the proprietor of the hotel. Bertie made a wise-

crack or two about the man's name while Dick stepped up to the bar to register. He saw the name signed ahead of his, "Alice Marr," and this seemed to disturb him.

"What bitter-sweet memories that name recalled; how vividly it brought back to his mind the fair, sunny-haired young wife who was sleeping so calmly now where the sweet-odored orange blossoms bloomed in the gleeful sunshine of the Californian land."

Returning to the present situation, Dick asked if Alice Marr were the young lady from the stage coach. On being told that was her name, he called for a bottle of wine. As Heinrich brought the bottle, Bertie shot it from the man's hand. Dick chastized his son for being too ready with his weapon.

A man entered with a letter for Diamond Dick, a letter given to him by a woman. Dick opened it and read a message from the past, sent by a woman who signed her name, "Kate."

"Is there no place in this wide world where I can hide from that wicked woman's importunities?" he asked. Nowhere, it would seem.

Chapter 5: "The California Nightingale"

Excitement was in the air in Tombstone. So was music as Alice Marr, the California Nightingale, was giving a concert in the Tombstone Opera House. Fire broke out during the performance and Tornado Tom leaped onto the stage to save her. Recognizing the new danger, she cried out for help and this time it was Diamond Dick to the rescue. A fight broke out between Dick and Tom's gang and in the fracas, Alice was carried off on horseback.

Dick saddled his horse, found the great bloodhound who had been chained out of sight until now in the cellar of the hotel, instructed Heinrich to watch out for Bertie, and rode off into the moonlight. He paused to check the trail and then onward rushed the great horse and alongside, the great hound, El Rey.

Chapter 6: "Tornado Tom's Plight"

Tornado Tom pleaded with Alice for her love as they rode. She refused him, but he swore no one would separate them. At the Bronco River he met a band of ten men, his brothers and friends, and Alice was transferred to a horse of her own. Tom's brother, Harry, stayed behind at the ford to hold off any pursuers while the band pushed on. The sound of shots soon reached them. It must be that Harry had taken care of the pursuers, they think, but then came the "long-drawn, deep-voiced bay of a hound." In the moonlight could be seen a lone horseman. Tornado Tom recognized him: "I know him—it is Diamond Dick, and Harry is dead."

Chapter 7: "A Wild Ride"

(Narrated in the present tense)

Diamond Dick covers five miles in 18 minutes on horseback and is soon at the Bronco where he out-shoots the man waiting in ambush. Picking up the fresh trail he rides on. His enemy waits for him. Weapons gleam in the moonlight and gunshots are heard. El Rey is wounded! The Winchester swings to Dick's shoulder and he takes careful aim into the dark mass of outlaws.

"More rapidly than tongue can count, the deadly repeater vomits out its contents in smoke, and fire, and leaden bullets, winged with sudden death."

He is now in the midst of his foes. A bullet carries away his hat and his long, dark hair streams free. Are they all dead? He doesn't know. Someone is still far ahead, he can tell. The horse is tired after coming twenty miles in an hour's time. El Rey saves his own wind for running. Ahead, Dick can see a number of riders heading for the pass.

Dick slows his horse on the un-even ground and draws his revolver. Into the pass they move. Five hundred yards. The horse keeps pace. Hoofbeats echo on the rocky hillside. Shots! Dick is unhurt. Hoofs echo back from ahead of him. Hoofs can be heard from behind. He pulls up into the shadow of a cliff. He fires on the pursuers and they fall.

Onward. He has now seen the girl and her captor ahead of him. More shots! One hits Dick in the arm. He sways in the saddle as the pain increases. A red mist covers his eyes. Tornado Tom stands at bay. Fifty yards more. Dick's horse stops short. His master leaps to the ground, barely able to see. Tornado Tom waits with cool patience. Too late. El Rey springs onto him and pulls him from his horse.

It is the end for Tornado Tom Hart. But Diamond Dick does not witness it. He lies silently on the ground where he too has fallen.

Chapter 8: "Bertie in a Bad Fix"

(Past tense resumed, as it is in the original)

Wells Fargo posted a reward of \$1,000 for the killer of Rocking-horse Sandy. A stranger of 19 or 20 (a gawky, stoop-shouldered, freckle-faced, youth) read the poster and scribbled something on it: \$5,000 is offered to the man who can take the killer. The signature: "The Thomas K. Cat, who bosses the Tigers of Tombstone."

Berties and Heinrich were standing by the window of the Here-it-is Hotel and saw the youth writing on the wanted poster. Bertie slipped down to read the newly amended notice and realized the writer must have been one of the gang. He tracked him outside of town and got the drop on him, forcing him to return to Tombstone. In spite of all the tricks the youth could try, he couldn't get Bertie to drop his gun. When he heard that this was the son of Diamond Dick who had captured him he called out a signal and two Tigers of Tombstone leaped from ambush.

Chapter 9: "Bertie Plays a Trump"

Bertie soon realized the strange youth and leader of the Tigers was a woman. The gang tied him to a horse and left him with only one guard. They underestimated him since he was a boy, and didn't even bother to tie his hands. With a hidden derringer, Bertie got the drop on his lone captor (a Mexican) and took him back to town to claim the reward offered for a member of the gang.

Once back in town, the bandit offered to reveal the hidingplace of the Tigers in exchange for his freedom. Jack Hamilton of Wells Fargo agreed when the bandit told them more. The leader of the Tigers was a woman (as Bertie had already discovered) named Kate who was seeking a man who had wronged her in the past—a man named Diamond Dick.

A posse was soon formed and the Mexican guided them to the hideout among the spurs of the Dragoon Mountains.

Chapter 10: "Captured By the Tigers"

Diamond Dick awoke from his exhaustion with Alice Marr trying to bring him around with whisky from a flask found on Tornado Tom's body. She

sterilized Dick's wounds with some of the whisky and bandaged his arm. The bullet had gone all the way through, missing the bone.

The two discovered they were in love and together began the long journey back to Tombstone. Dick's horse had recovered from the previous night's race and Tornado Tom's horse stood nearby for Alice to ride. They stopped at the Bronco River and dismounted to let the horses drink. "And Diamond Dick stooped down and kissed the pure young lips."

A mocking laugh interrupted them. It was Kate and the Tigers of Tombstone. Diamond Dick was soon dis-armed. El Rey attacked the man holding Dick and killed him, but the leader shot the gallant dog.

Chapter 11: "A Devilish Shot—Conclusion"

Backing up a bit in time, we see the discovery by Kate and her men of the escape of Bertie. The gang then decided to look for a new hiding place. Jack Hamilton and his posse arrived at the old one just a bit too late, but the trail was plain enough and they set off to follow it.

At the Bronco, Kate mocked Dick and taunted him with his promise of the past to marry her. Alice asked who this woman was and what she was to Dick. Dick explained that he was to have married her a year before until he realized how evil she was. Kate was a woman who "even while yet my kisses were warm upon her lips, was plotting in the arms of her lover against my honor, my wealth, and my life."

Kate demanded to know who Alice was that she deserved such an explanation and Dick announces their betrothal. Kate raised her revolver at hearing this and shot Alice Marr dead. Alice clutched at Dick as she fell and he, agony in his eyes, gently lowered her to the ground.

Diamond Dick turned on Kate and his voice froze her blood. "May your life be from this moment one seething, bubbling hell of remorse and unrest, and in every voice, every sound, may you hear the cry of Cain!" He swore vengeance, but, weakened by his wounds, fell to the ground.

It was soon learned he wasn't dead and Kate ordered him put onto a horse along with the dead girl.

A volley of shots rang out to interrupt Kate's intentions and a posse of miners, lead by Bertie and Jack Hamilton, came onto the scene. It was all over. Kate levelled her pistol at Bertie, then changed her mind and lashed her horse in her effort to escape along with the rest of her gang.

Bertie stopped to revive his father who assured the boy he would be all right. Kate and one of her band had escaped by now.

Alice Marr was laid to rest in the cemetery. Dick slowly recovered from his wounds, but it would be fully two months before he and Bertie were able to leave Tombstone. When asked where they were headed, Diamond Dick answered only, "On her trail."

Thus, we come to the end of the first in a long series of western adventures about Richard Wade, Diamond Dick. Melodramatic, implausible, poorly constructed, but fascinating. The criticism that could be leveled at this story could be so listed. One can say that of so many dime novels it isn't worth the effort. The point to emphasize is why this story should have so captured its early readers that it was reprinted twice, why it is so fascinating.

Written at breakneck speed, perhaps, there are often passages of "back-ing and filling-in" where the author must explain the fortuitous appearance of some character not suspected of being in the neighborhood. Yet the pace of the story, the vivid characters, the small touches, the spark of imagination in the writer, all contribute to its enjoyment.

Diamond Dick himself is flamboyant, yet modest and authoritative; there is a mystery about his background which must have been appealing to the first readers; the hint of more to come that keeps one reading to find out what-will-happen-next. That magnificent chase in chapter 7, told in the present tense to heighten the sense of the speed and the suspense, holds ones interest no matter how many times it is read.

Dashing Diamond Dick stands in relation to the rest of the Diamond Dick saga as does Nick Carter, Detective. Both are the first numbers of a regular series of stories, the characters of which had previously been introduced in the pages of the *New York Weekly*. The two Diamond Dick serials (*Diamond Dick*; or, *The Sarpint of Siskiyou County. A Romance of Arizona*, and its sequel *Silver Mask*; or, *The Sarpint of Siskiyou*) were later reprinted in the *Log Cabin Library*, first edition only, and the *Nugget Library* (with slightly altered titles), but they seem to have been omitted in later re-issues of the early stories in *Diamond Dick, Jr., the Boys Best Weekly*.

There appear to have been two or three different kinds of "series" within the dime novel format. One would tell the separate adventures of a single hero in a manner so that the sequence in which one read the stories mattered little. Such is the Nick Carter series. Another would tell the continuing adventures of a single hero in which each story could stand alone, not dependent on the reader having read the previous one, but in which the reader might want to read them all anyway. Such is the Frank Merriwell series in which the author very often had the characters discuss the background leading up to the present story. The characters age slowly and progress is made in their separate lives, but the reader's enjoyment is not dependent upon having started with the first number.

The Diamond Dick stories at first fell into a third category: the series in which each story builds upon events in the previous story, or elucidates some of those events. At the end of *Dashing Diamond Dick*, Wade has yet to settle things with Kate. This is dealt with in the next story, *Diamond Dick's Death Trail*, in which he falls heir to a lost silver mine. The third story, *Diamond Dick's Claim*, tells of the search for the mine (and introduces—or re-introduces, since he was in the serials—Handsome Harry, the Sarpint of Siskiyou, one of the major characters in the saga), but it leaves the reader with a literal cliff-hanger. *Diamond Dick*, Harry, and Bertie, have apparently perished at the bottom of the chasm near the Medicine Man Mine. The next story is, appropriately enough, called *The Shade of Diamond Dick*.

In the course of all these stories, much of Diamond Dick's background and character is learned. This mysteriousness about a hero was one of the conventions of the dime novel, along with the reliance on coincidence, identical twins, lost fortunes, recovered birth rights, and the triumph of virtue. Some of these conventions may be seen in *Dashing Diamond Dick*—even the title is in the dime novel tradition of alliteration. These conventions are also more important to the story-teller, eager to keep things moving and to hold his audience, than to the man of letters, leisurely plumbing the depths of his hero's psyche. For this is the strength of the dime novel—it is a story-telling medium, not a literary genre.

The rapid action, the gaps in information, the backing-and-filling, all help keep the reader turning the pages. One reads on, hoping for an explanation. If the explanation does not come (as it often does not come in a complete form) imagination fills in the gaps. This was a less sophisticated age (by our standards) and the audience for Diamond Dick was primarily a youthful, uncritical one. How much they swallowed whole is uncertain.

The author of **Dashing Diamond Dick** was that durable house name, W. B. Lawson, a name which masked Robert Russell for this story and several which followed, according to J. Edward Leithead. This reviewer found his disbelief suspended and his curiosity whetted sufficiently to seek out the sequels. What more could a story-teller desire?

Bibliographical History

Dashing Diamond Dick; or, **The Tigers of Tombstone**. Nugget Library No. 16 (Dec. 12, 1889); **New York Five Cent Library** No. 88 (July 7, 1894); **Diamond Dick, Jr.** No. 104 (Oct. 8, 1898). (The latter edition was re-issued in facsimile as Dime Novel Club Reprint No. 23, by Charles Bragin.)

Post Script (after having read **Diamond Dick in Arizona** in Nugget Library No. 111).

This original story of **Diamond Dick**, first serialized in the **New York Weekly** and signed by "Delta Calaveras" and now signed by "W. B. Lawson," explains several things about our hero not covered in **Dashing Diamond Dick**. His "strange, white pallor" was caused by having been strangled with a rope (almost hanged) in the hands of the villains who wanted the secret hiding place of his treasure. The treasure itself had been hidden by Dick's half brother, Pietro Dizama. The story tells of Dick's meeting Alice Reardon, who became his wife and Bertie's mother. It does not explain fully the reason for the diamond buttons or his Spanish costume, although this showmanship may have been suggested by the elegant dress once affected by Wild Bill Hickok. Perhaps this is part of the mystery of **Diamond Dick's** past that will intrigue us forever.

One additional note: in both **Diamond Dick in Arizona** and **Dashing Diamond Dick** the hero speaks perfect English, in contrast to the other characters who speak a sort of Wild Western American slang ("Howdy, pard, whut's thet in yer mitt?") In later stories, Dick and Bertie seem to affect this sort of dialect when they choose, but can speak the King's English as well. Whether this was intended as a subtle satire on the conventions of dime novel westerns (the switch is noticed by at least one character in the story) or merely to make the heroes distinctive is not certain. A much later story has a character addressed as "Poison Kate," to which that worthy replies, "It's Pizen Kate! Don't give it no Boston twist!" It is the little touches like this which make the **Diamond Dick** saga so satisfying.

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Success and Failure

A Short History of English "Penny Dreadful" Publishers

By W. O. G. Lofts

On the whole, publishers of boys papers and other popular fiction for the working classes were highly successful regarding financial returns. Indeed, several after very humble beginnings eventually rose to millionaire status as well as owning vast publishing empires.

A pioneer of these was Edward Lloyd, who at an early age opened a small newsagents shop at Shoreditch in the East End of London, and then began publishing around 1836. It would not be strictly correct to say that he published boys stories, as they were mainly penny weekly instalments of lurid bloodthirsty tales intended for all ages—though they were the forerunner of boys literature that started around 1860. Lloyd's publications fell into mainly three categories: Gothic Horrors—which included the famous **Varney the Vampire** and **Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber**, historical, and domestic romances. They had an enormous sale amongst the lower class of readers of the mid-19th century, and with the writers getting very low pay, the profits were tremendously high. Thomas Pecket Prest, his main contributor of over 200 novels dying penniless in a back room at East Islington in 1859, and being buried in a common grave.

Edward Lloyd, also among other writers, blatantly plagiarised the works of England's greatest novelist Charles Dickens, almost as soon as they were published with slight variations of title. Examples of these were **Oliver Twiss**, **Penny Pickwick**, and **Nickolas Nickleberry**, with the author titled "Bos" instead of "Boz," likewise these sold in great numbers, and it is said even more than the original versions! Dickens was furious at this pirating of his novels, and led large campaigns to stop it, but could do nothing to stop it, as the copyright act was not in force in those early Victorian days.

Later, with his fortune expanding all the time, Lloyd went on to produce higher quality material, and it was well known that he was so ashamed and feeling guilty as to how he had made his fortune. He then did something which had not been done before, or will ever be done again in the world of publishing. He had teams of men going around all the bookstalls, street markets, bazaars, penny-lending libraries, and other places, buying up all his old material and then destroying them in their thousands. As a consequence, very few Lloyd early publications are in existence today, and the two bloods mentioned earlier fetch very high prices, if indeed they can be found. Though thanks to Dover Publications, collectors were able to read the famous **Varney the Vampire** in a reprint edition. Founder of Lloyd's Newspaper, Lloyd's Shipping List, The Daily News, and other newspapers, Edward Lloyd died on the 8th April 1890 in London aged 75, leaving the equivalent of todays values of over 15 million dollars.

Alfred J. Harmsworth, founder of England's greatest and largest publishing firm, started with several of his brothers in a small building in Tudor Street, just off the more famous Fleet Street. His first publications were in the adult field including the famous **Answers**, but in 1890 he added a host of boys papers and comics to his ever growing list of periodicals. It was in the **Halfpenny Marvel** that Sexton Blake first appeared, and this detective was for the next 75 years make his firm over half a million pounds, and is still their copyright today. A year later Nelson Lee Detective appeared in the same paper, and whilst never quite so popular as the great Baker Street Detective, he still made rich rewards for his publisher.

Union Jack, Thriller, Sexton Blake Library, Nelson Lee Library, Boys Friend Library, Boys Friend, Realm, and Herald, Triumph, Champion, Gem, Magnet (which had the fat boy Billy Bunter) are only a few of the boys papers they published by the firm founded by Alfred Harmsworth. Apart from many girls papers (many selling more than boys) their comic papers such as Chips, Comic Cuts, Rainbow, Film Fun, Jester, Funny Wonder had a weekly circulation of nearly 5 million, and when one considers the numerous best selling adult publications, and yearly Annuals by the time the founder died in 1922 (he was made Lord Northcliffe in 1905) also owning the famous Daily Mail the firm had assets of millions.

From Harmsworth Brothers, to Amalgamated Press Ltd., then to Fleetway Publications, now known as I.P.C. (magazines Ltd.) they are the largest publishers in the world, and juvenile papers are still produced for the children of today under the capable hands of John Saunders—a man dedicated to give what boys and girls want to read, and whom Alfred Harmsworth would have been proud of.

Another successful publisher was Edwin James Brett. The son of an army officer, in his early days in 1848, he was a political associate of the famous G. W. M. Reynolds. Strangely enough he began his journalistic career as an artist, but his style which can be seen in Harrison's *The Blue Dwarf*, shows that he lacked professional artistic talent. Later he became partner in some minor publishing firms including the Emmett Brothers, and then joined the Newsagents Publishing Company. This firm rivaled Edward Lloyd in producing many famous bloods with such titles as *The Boy Detective*, *The Boy Pirate*, and *The Wild Boys of London*.

Brett, then started in earnest in the boys paper field, and his first *The Boys Companion* in 1865 was a flop. His second which started in the same year could be described as highly successful, as this ran right up till 1899—indeed until four years after his death. It was in this paper that the famous and highly popular Jack Harkaway first appeared, and this very first main character in boys paper history, was probably the main instrument in making Brett's fortune. He soon became the leading publisher of boys papers in England, issuing no less than twenty-one during his life-time as well as scores of adult publications. Brett led a very colorful life, and put his profits to great use, having one of the finest collections of suits of armor in the world, and owning an ocean going yacht. An expert in these fields he also wrote text books on the subject.

Edwin Brett died at Holloway, North London on the 15th December 1895 aged 67 a very wealthy man, also having another beautiful home on the isle of Thanet in Kent. This was packed with treasures of art, and the firm continued some years after his death producing further boys papers such as *Young Men of Great Britain*, *Boys Comic Journal*, *Halfpenny Surprise*, and *Our Boys Journal*.

Nothing could be further in direct contrast to these successful publishers than the Aldine Publishing Company Ltd. This firm probably holds more interest to the American collector than any other English publisher, for the reason that in their early days they specialized in reprinting stories from American Dime Novels. As this concern ran for well over forty years, it was always concluded that it must have been a highly successful business, and who can blame the old-timers for assuming this fact? A perusal only recently of the Company records tells a vastly different story, of losses practically year after year, until they finally went into liquidation in 1932. But for the start of the Aldine misfortunes one must start as always at the beginning.

The Aldine Publishing Company was started around 1888 with such papers as **British Boys**, and **Garfield Boys Library** (named after the American President). Its founder was Charles Perry Brown, who had been connected with boys papers since the age of 19, his first venture believed to be **Boys Journal** (1863). In 1895, it was decided to make the firm into a limited company with a capital of £126,500, and this commenced on the 13th June 1895. Brown having 41,000 shares and being the main shareholder.

It was the Aldin firm who introduced **Deadwood Dick** to England where he appeared in **Boys First Rate Pocket Library** (1890-1905 472 issue) and other American reprints were as follows:

Aldine Half-Holiday Library. (1892-1910 904 issues)

Reprints of Beadle & Adams Dime Novels.

Romance of Invention, Travel and Adventure Library. (1894-1906 272 issues)

Reprints of Frank Reades.

Detective Tales. (1889-1906 348 issues)

Reprints such as *Deathface*, *Neverfail*, etc.

Garfield Library (1890-1897 92 issues)

Reprints from American boys stories including *Alger*.

Tip-Top Tales. (1890-1904 328 issues)

Reprints of *Broadway Billy* and *Deadwood Dick*.

Buffalo Bill Library (1897-1909 230 issues)

Reprints from American stories but revised slightly by English writers

Around 1901 however, they started to produce Libraries featuring characters from English folklore, and other colorful romantic outlaws whose deeds of daring were hero-worshipped by the youthful reader. These being the **Robin Hood**, **Dick Turpin**, **Claude Duval**, **SpringHeeled Jack**, **Jack Shepard** and **Red Rover Libraries**—the latter featuring *Blackbeard the Pirate*. But despite this excursion into the English field, none of them having any length or run. 1906 saw the firm deeply in debt, with several mortgages obtained on the strength of their property at Crown Court.

By this time, the founder Charles Perry Brown had probably seen eventual financial ruin if he contained to plough money in the firm, and so resigned. When he died in 1916 at the age of 82, he left a small fortune, but certainly not from any dividends from the Aldine Publishing firm.

With the departure of Brown from the firm he founded, seemingly new Directors were appointed, and then left after a short space of time. 1909 saw only £87 in the bank, and in a letter to the Board of Trade in 1910 the secretary made the admission that "the firm had not made any profit for many years." By 1913 they owed £65,000 in preference shares, the losses increasing all the time till they reached £100,000 when they were all simply written off. 1916 must have been a boom year, as they actually made a profit of £40, and for not making much more they blamed the First World War paper shortage.

1923 saw many battles fought out in the law courts by disgruntled shareholders, and this must have stirred the firm up considerably, for in 1926 they made a record profit of £378! Unfortunately, this was instantly seized by the banks as interest on the mortgages obtained, and the firm was only able to continue by borrowing money in the form of debentures. However, following heavy losses in 1931 and 1932, they finally decided to go into voluntary liquidation. The sales of effects dragged on for nearly four years, the sales of copyrights, and property at least realizing some assets. When the firm officially died it could be estimated that half-a-million pounds had been invested and lost in the Aldine Publishing Company Limited.

It is really remarkable how such a business could have carried on for so long, and one wonders what exactly went wrong for a firm which by all appearances was highly successful. Certainly it could not have been their presentation, as it is generally agreed that their covers drawn by that brilliant artist Robert Prowse were the best ever in boys literature in that period. The blame can probably be placed in their abridgement of the stories from the original American dime-novels. Textual comparisons have revealed that the original American stories were simply butchered to meet the length requirements of the Aldine publications. This was done not apparently by a skilled editor, but by obviously untrained sub-editors. Such mutilation frequently destroyed the continuity of the story, and the finished product simply did not flow in a readable manner. Consequently, when by practice they reprinted the tales, not once, but many times, and abridged them even further, the plot became almost meaningless. The reader, attracted by the brilliant cover, would soon lose interest when he tried to enjoy the reading matter, and therefore would seek more readable material on his next purchase.

With having such poor financial standing, Aldine's could not afford to pay for new material, so they churned out the same stories under different titles and Libraries over and over again, so that even the most loyal reader would be paying for the same tale twice in a very short space of time. After the First World War, when they realized that they simply had to have more modern stories from English writers to remain in business, their rates paid were far less than the majority of other publishing firms. The result being, that they failed to attract the better class of writers, and in fact some of those they did employ had been rejected by the larger publishing firms as being not up to standard.

Chief editor of the Aldine Publishing Company was Walter Herrod Light, who was also one of their main contributors! It was well known that he used to put different invented names to stories each week to give the impression that he had plenty of authors on his staff. Their offices at Crown Court, consisted of several small and dingy rooms occupied by Walter Light (who also had some shares in the firm) an assistant, office boy, and secretary. A far from impressive place for a firm who looked so prosperous on the basis of the numerous publications they produced.

Following their liquidation, several large warehouses were known to be full of remainders, some publications being unsold and dated back to pre-1900. A few old-timers in the collecting sphere before the last war, were able to purchase some rare and choice items, but later a fire-bomb destroyed all that remained of a publishing concern, that seemed a dismal failure since its conception.

Publishing boys papers then obviously can either be highly rewarding, or financially disastrous, and in the latter category—none surely more than the ill-fated Aldine Publishing Company.

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup (quite a few reprints, can't be helped). Don't have the complete set of No. 1 to 237 inclusive, but almost, lacking only a few numbers. 10c each or \$21.00 postpaid. Have at least 230 numbers or more. Also two indexes, 1 Pioneer and Scouts

of the Old West, Birthday number, War Library list and Dime Novel Catalog.

Ralph F. Cummings

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301. William L. Favreau, 110 Nevada Ave., Wilmington, Del. 19803
302. Stewart C. McLeish, 270 Shute St., Apt. 6, Everett, Mass. 02149
303. Mrs. Richard W. Clark, 235 Broadway, Apt. 3, South Portland, Me. 04106
304. Jerold Rauth, N70 W6204 Bridge Road, Cedarburg, Wisc. 53012
305. Diana J. Berry, 120 Sanial Ave., Northvale, N. J. 07647
306. Mohawk Valley Community College, 1101 Sherman Drive, Utica, N. Y. 13501
307. Paul Flayer, Box 431, Ridgefield, N. J. 07657
308. Jim Deutsch, 2211 Third Ave. So., Apt. 8, Minneapolis, Minn. 55404
309. Frank Scott, Route 1, Box 294 D-1, Suring, Wis. 54174
310. Rocco Musemeche, P. O. Box 1232, New Iberia, La. 70560
311. Cliff J. Bedore, Box 4 RR #2, New Holstein, Wis. 53061
312. John Fish, 63 E. Front St., Hancock, N. Y. 13783
313. John R. Downs, 774 Mary Ann Drive NE, Marietta, Ga. 30062
314. Jerome Holtsman, 1225 Forest Ave., Evanston, Ill. 60202
315. George Mueyk, 115-70 237th St., Elmont, N. Y. 11003
316. Gene Hafner, 9 Northampton Road, Timonium, Md. 21093
317. Donald Bronsky, M. D., 104 Oak St., Binghamton, N. Y. 13905
318. Charles S. Robison, R 2, Box 332, Crestwood, Ky. 40014
319. Earl R. Dozier, 1112 W. Dessau Road, Austin, Texas 78753
320. Lynn W. Gates, 227 Prospect St., Jamestown, N. Y. 14701
321. Edward A. Pollock, Box 133, Sparkill, N. Y. 10976
322. William A. McElhone, 603 Newport Gap Pike, Wilmington, Del. 19084
323. Prof. Mabel R. Skjelver, 1631 North 61st St., Lincoln, Nebr. 68505
324. Frances U. Epitz, 1430 Magnolia, Glenview, Ill. 60026
325. Ben Jason, 3971 East 71st St., Cleveland, Ohio 44105
326. Walker Martin, 432 Latona Ave., Trenton, N. J. 08618
327. Vernon Tyner, 11 Maple Ave., Avoca, N. Y. 14809
328. Brandeis University, the Library, Waltham, Mass. 02154
329. Michael Hollander, P. O. Box 3678, San Rafael, Calif. 94902
330. Joseph C. Lutz, 245 South Ridgeland Ave., Oak Park, Ill. 60302
331. Albert M. Stangler, 37 West 16th St., New York, N. Y. 10011
332. William B. Naughton, 59 Arlington Road, Woburn, Mass. 01801
333. B. Frank Vogel, 102 Lynnwood Circle, Hattiesburg, Miss. 39401
334. Don Hutchison, 6 South Drive, Toronto, Ont., Canada M4W 1R1
335. Tracy Catledge, P. O. Box 583, Fern Park, Fla. 32730
336. Public Library of Cincinnati, 800 Vine St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
337. Gary Hoppenstand, 2014 Mackenzie Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43220
338. Book World, 2523 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46222
339. J. Dan Williams, 9571 Ravensworth Drive, Houston, Texas 77031
340. Timothy Mahoney, 14665 Washington Ave., #48, San Leandro, Cal. 94578
341. John Ehrmann, Jr., 41038 El Lago Court, Indianapolis, Ind. 46227
342. Robert E. Walters, 96 McClain Road, Columbus, Ohio 43212
343. David C. Andrews, Box 53, Andes, N. Y. 13731
344. Baldwin's Book Barn, 865 Lenape Road, West Chester, Pa. 19380
345. Hayes E. Wilcox, 6250 Springmyer, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211

- 346. Michael Solomon, Box 684, Cambridge, Mass. 02139
- 347. Jon Gentilman, 3658 Stevely Ave., Long Beach, Calif. 90808
- 348. Harvey King, 1705 Caton Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11226
- 349. Peter C. Walther, 6 Hara Crescent, New Hartford, N. Y. 13413
- 350. M. C. Hill (Bunker Books), P. O. Box 1638, Spring Valley, Calif. 92077
- 351. James A. Kraynik, 2210 Bullis Road, Elma, N. Y. 14059
- 352. Russell L. Mowry, 100 Girard Road, Cumberland, R. I. 02864
- 353. Richard H. Minter, Box 4324, Eden, N. C. 27288
- 354. Saint Olaf College, Rovaag Memorial Library, Northfield, Minn. 55057
- 355. Thomas J. Sweeney, Jr., 1029 Old Philadelphia Road, Aberdeen, Md. 21001

There was a net increase of 7 members during 1976. 7 members died: Carl Linville, Mrs. S. T. Hoyt, Melvin J. Nichols, Leo F. Moore, Edward Reynolds, C. L. Messecar, George D. Schindler. 24 members dropped for various reasons: Robert Frye, Harry A. Weill, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Gloria L. Terrio, Ted Dikty, Clarence M. Fink, Mrs. Bertrand Couch, Evelyn B. Byrne, John Scott, South Pasadena Public Library, Ivor A. Rogers, Baton V. Wilson, Ruth V. McKee, William E. Buechel, James W. Froehlig, Mel Morrison, W. A. Seaman, T. Stewart Goas, Merritt A. Russell, Richard A. Miozza, Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc., Dr. Elizabeth A. Lawrence, Gene Fiege, and Barry King. 38 new members were enrolled beginning with No. 318 above.

JESSE JAMES SINGS AGAIN!

J. Randolph Cox

On Sept. 7, 1876, Jesse James & Co. attempted to hold up the First National Bank in Northfield, Minnesota. They failed and the incident passed into both history and legend. Each year, a little of both finds its way into the Northfield festival known as the Defeat of Jesse James Days, during which the famous bank robbery is re-enacted.

For the centennial observance (and as a Bicentennial project), an original musical, "Jesse," was staged by the Northfield Arts Guild Musical Theater. With book by Marion and Robert Moulton, lyrics by Vern Sutton, and music by William Huckaby, the life and times of Jesse James had its world premier on September 9, 1976. The 9 scenes (in two acts) were presented with a professional skill that was a credit to all concerned.

If what emerged were more legend than history, so be it! It was more faithful than many a celluloid presentation and by now Mr. James is somewhat larger than life anyway. In some ways, it was a dime novel come to life.

The acting was excellent, the music was catchy and memorable. The Ballad of Jesse James was used at appropriate places in the story, but it was an original song called "Money Talks" which stuck in the memory weeks afterwards. It was high melodrama with cheers for Jesse and hisses for both Bob Ford and Clyde Wagstaff, the Pinkerton man. Local performers contributed to make it an event and one which it is hoped will be revived from time to time.

This reviewer saw it on a Friday evening, after a particularly exhausting week of work. It was the best tonic possible. The cobwebs fell away and the muscles eased their tension. (Move aside, citizens of Deadwood! All you had was Wild Bill Hickok!)

DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOKSHELF

STRANGE HORIZONS, The Spectrum of Science Fiction, by Sam Moskowitz. Charles Scribner's Son, 597 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10017. \$8.95, 298 pages with index. Mr. Moskowitz always amazes me with his handling of a lifetime of reading and condensing it into meaningful trends. His latest book follows various themes in science fiction: women, religion, anti-semitism, civil rights, etc. One chapter is devoted to Tom Swift, before during and after. I'm proud to add this title to my shelf.

BEST MARTIN HEWITT DETECTIVE STORIES, by Arthur Morrison, \$3.00
GREAT CASES OF THE THINKING MACHINE, by Jacques Futrelle, \$3.00
CELEBRATED CASES OF JUDGE DEE, From the Chinese, \$3.50

Three great books for the Detective Story collector. The first two are introduced by Mr. E. F. Bleiler and are worth the price of the books for the informative review. The third is translated and introduced by Robert Van Gulick. Published paperbound by Dover Publications, 180 Varick St., New York, N. Y. 10014.

DOC SAVAGE: HIS APOCALYPTIC LIFE, Bantam Books, 1975, by Philip Jose Farmer. It tells about Savage's creation, and lists a bibliography of his adventures. (Sent in by Jack Bales.)

BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS; OR, SITTING BULL'S HISTORY LESSON, by Alan Rudolph and Robert Altman. Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10019, \$1.95. This is the printed scenario of the movie of the same name with illustrations from publicity photos. A complete fictitious burlesque of Buffalo Bill, his wild west show and Sitting Bull. Made me cringe at some of the absurdities inflicted on both Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull. Little notice was taken of historical fact. Ned Buntline and Prentiss Ingraham are portrayed in the film and the book.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

CONCERNING DIME NOVELS, BOYS BOOKS, ETC.

TOM SAWYER PASSES THE ONE HUNDRED MARK, by David Soibelman. Article in Los Angeles Times, Dec. 15, 1976. A review of Mark Twain's famous book on the occasion of its 100th anniversary of its first publication, December 1876.

THE BOUDOIR TALES OF HORATIO ALGER, JR., by Gary F. Scharnhorst. Article in Journal of Popular Culture, Summer 1976, Vol. 10, No. 1. A very good article on the "adult" tales written by Alger. The title of the article belies the fact that Alger's adult stories were anything but sexy.

THE FRANK MERRIWELL STORY, Anonymous. Short article in Weekly Football Forecasts, Nov. 20, 1976, Vol. 22, No. 11. Published by Sports Publications, 6000 Camp Bowie Blvd., Suite 155, Fort Worth, Texas 76116. Very good short history of the Merriwells. One error crept in. The writer states that Patten took a trip to Nebraska for one and then started writing western stories. Actually Patten spent quite some time in Denver and his stories of the area reflect first hand knowledge.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. I have two books of "The Great West Series" by Joseph A. Altsheeler, "The Great Sioux Trail" and "The Lost Hunters." However the two books do not complete the story, and there must be one or more sequels. Could anyone supply the title or titles that complete the series? The hero is young Will Clarke and his companions are a hunter and scout, Jim Boyd and a prospector, Tom Bent, known as "The Little Giant." Bob Walters.

Q. How many volumes were there in the "Up the Ladder Club Series" by Edward A. Rand? George Holmes.

A. There were 5 volumes in the series:

1. Knights of the White Shield
2. School in the Lighthouse
3. Yardstick and Scissors
4. Camp at Surf Bluff
5. Out of the Breakers

They were republished a number of years later by the Methodist Book Co. Among other series authored by Rev. Rand were the School and Camp Series and Look Ahead Series. He was a very prolific writer. Stanley Pachon.

Q. What was the real name of Capt. Nautilus, author of "The Boy Captain"? George Holmes.

A. Clement Eldridge used the pseudonym of "Captain Nautilus." He wrote another book under this pseudonym called "Rescued by a Princess" published by Saalfeld in 1901. Later editions of these books carried his real name. Stanley Pachon.

SINGLE ISSUES NEEDED, Old Periodicals

Student and Schoolmate, 1863, January; 1854, May, August; 1871, January, March, September, December

New York Weekly: Vol. XXI, 1876, #20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 43, 44, 45, 46

NOTE: I have the Alger item. Looking for the 2 Pa. Coal Mine items.

Golden Argosy: Vol. I, No. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 50, 51, 52

Vol. II, No. 13, 14

Vol. V, No. 1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 29, 30, 41, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39

Argosy: Vol. VII, No. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

Vol. XIV, No. 501, 502, 503, 504, 505

Good News: Vol. III, No. 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77 (this is April thru Sept., '91)

Vol. XV, No. 36 (May 16, 1897)

Army and Navy Weekly: Vol. I, Nos. 1, 2

American Boy Magazine: 1907, January, February, March, April, May, June '07

Bright Days: Vol. II, Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Oct. 10, 1896 thru Dec. 12, 1896, inclusive

Golden Days: Vol. IX Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23.

PAUL F. MILLER

4365 Belmar Terrace, Vienna, Ohio 44473 — 216-856-2522

Letters

Dear Eddie,

I have just received 10 copies of New York Detective out of the lot I advertised for, and one of them is not in the list I furnished for the Doughty article. This is definitely and unmistakably by him. His style and method, at least in the early years are so individual that there can be no doubt about his authorship of a particular story. In reading some items that I marked as possibilities for one reason or another I realized that they were not his, simply from the absence of a positive reaction. Harold Holmes once had, from Bragin, a bound volume of 15 numbers of NYDL inscribed on the fly-leaf "to Cecil Burleigh, from his friend Frank Doughty." Bragin thought that they were by FWD, but on reading them I knew that they were not his. My feeling is that they were Burleigh's own, and that as a gesture of friendship Doughty had them bound up in permanent form for CB.

Anyway, here is the added story:

Dec. 3, 1887—The Midnight Men; or, Three Lieutenants from the Tennessee.
By a N. Y. Detective. 261 NYDL.

The knowledgeable E. F. Bleiler wrote me a very nice letter about The New Sensation biblio, and made two inspired suggestions. Thanks to them, I have been able to trace the source of two of the serials in The New Sensation.

The first is "Ciprina; or, A Wife's Secret." Nos. 1-16. This is reprinted from G. W. M. Reynolds' "Agnes; or, Beauty and Pleasure," which first was published in 1855. "Ciprina" consists of chapters 4 through 14 of "Agnes," Vol. 2, with a fabricated ending.

The second is "Ginevra; or, The Mysterious Penitent" which ran in Nos. 112-24. This also is taken from "Agnes" and consists of Chapters 36 through 48 of volume one. This also has a concocted ending. The only change, except for a slight abridgment, is that Charles De Vere in the original is called Edgar Montrose in the reprint. It is hard to imagine why, because the names of the other characters are unchanged.

Best wishes, Ross Craufurd

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Jerry Todd and the Whispering Mummy, G&D, red cov. gold ltr. Good	2.00
Jerry Todd, Caveman, G&D, red cov. gold ltr. Good	2.00
Jerry Todd, Editor-in-Grief, G&D, red cov. black ltr. Fish on cover, map end papers, VG	2.50
Jerry Todd, Editor-in-Grief, G&D, red cov. gold ltr. Good	2.00
Jerry Todd, Editor-in-Grief, G&D, red cov. gold ltr. Fair	1.50
Jerry Todd in the Whispering Cave. G&D, red cov, gold ltr. Good but stain on cover	1.50
Jerry Todd, Pirate. G&D, red cov. gold ltr. Good	2.00
Jerry Todd, Pirate. G&D, red cov. gold ltr. Fair, hinge cracked	1.50
Poppy Ott and the Galloping Snail. G&D, red cov gold ltr. Poor, reading copy	1.00
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Signal Boys, The. G. P. Putnam, 1878, "Big Brother Series," red cov. black lettering, gold imprint on cover. Good	3.00
ELLIS, EDWARD S.	
Adrift in the Wilds. Burt. Orange cov. boy in pork pie hat in diamond. Good	2.00
Adrift in the Wilds. Burt. Green cov. red ltr. 3-panels on cover, one with boy with knapsack. Fair, hinge cracked	2.00
Adrift in the Wilds. Burt. Green and blue cover. 2 panels, one boy with rifle. Reading copy	1.00
Brave Tom. Winston. Red cover, sports motif with snowshoes on cover. Hinge cracked	1.50
Cabin in the Clearing, The. Henry T. Coates. Green cover. Sports motif with fishing rod on cover. Fair, some pages loose	1.50
From the Throttle to the President's Chair. G&D red cover. Boy reading book on deck of ship. Fair, hinge cracked	1.00
Hunters of the Ozark, The. Henry T. Coates. Grey and brown cover. "Deerfoot Series" on cover. Indian aiming rifle. Good, hinge crkd	2.00
Jack Midwood. Winston. Red cover. Bucking broncho on cover. Fair, hinge cracked	1.50
Jaunt Through Java, A. Burt. Green cover. Boy in pork pie hat in diamond. Fair, some loose pages	1.50
Life of Boone. Winston. Red and green cover. Reading copy	1.00
Life of Kit Carson. G&D Green ta, and brown cover. Good cond.	3.00
Lost in Samoa. Cassel. Green and gold cover. Fair, hinge cracked	1.50
Lost in the Rockies. Donohue, thin ed. Poor, hinge cracked, loose pages	1.00
On the Trail of the Moose. Winston. Red cover. Sports motif with snowshoes on cover. Fair, hinge cracked	1.50
On the Trail of the Moose. Porter & Coates. "Wild Wood Series" on cover. Brown and blue cover, wooded scene. VG	4.00
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